1787

STATED RULES

OF

THE SOCIETY

OF THE

UNITED BRETHREN,

FOR

PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL

AMONG

THE HEATHEN.

PHILADELPHIA:

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PREFACE.

Beloved Reader,

THE word of God, the bible, full of the moſt precious promiſes for the propagation and extenſion of the kingdom of God among the Heathen nations, (which we in a great meaſure ſee fulfilled in the different tongues and nations from which we come) with a feeling for the unhappy ſtate of all ſuch who live in heatheniſh darkneſs, has from the beginning of chriſtianity, cauſed in believers a hearty deſire, to help and to aſſiſt in that bleſſed work of preaching the goſpel among all nations.

Such a pious deſire, that Jeſus Chriſt and his ſalvation might alſo be made known to the Indians in North-America, moved the directors of the ancient Epiſcopal Church, called *Unitas Fratrum* or *United Brethren* near fifty years ago to begin a miſſion in this country, by which a number of Mahikans, Wampanos, Delawares, a few Shawanos, Nantikoks and others, have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and thereby collected into the chriſtian-church, in which they lived a civil, moral chriſtian life, under the care and tuition of the miſſionaries as a ſhining light to the wild Indians, until their towns on Muſkingum-river were unhappily deſtroyed in the laſt war.

Above one thouſand ſouls have been received into the chriſtian-church by holy baptiſm from theſe Indian nations, more than ſix hundred of them departed this life in faith, and about three hundred more live yet with the miſſionaries near Lake Erie, or are diſperſed among their different tribes, on account of the ſufferings and manifold troubles, which befel the Indian-congregation; the reſt either died or live yet as apoſtates in the wilderneſs.

In the hiſtory of the Brethren's miſſion among the Indians,

Indians, (which is preparing for the preſs) the reader will find a true account of the loſſes, perſecutions, and great ſufferings of the Indian converts to chriſtianity and a regular civil life, and what obſtacles and difficulties the miſſionaries had to combat with in their calling; if faith, hope and love had not been their armour, they would have deſerted the field long ago.

The unavoidable expences of the work were provided by charitable collections in the Brethren's congregations, made in ſome but once, and in others twice a year, & the defect made up by our Brethren abroad.

The change of government, the encreaſe of the expences by the local ſituation of the Indian-congregation, and great diſtance of the Indian nations, ſuggeſted a new arrangement, and the forming of a regular ſociety for the ſupport of the miſſions was propoſed and reſolved, upon the plan here ſubjoined.

The holy ſcripture teaches us to conſider the whole race of men, as one great family. God created us all. We come all from one blood. We are all ſinners. Jeſus Chriſt died for us all, and commanded to preach the goſpel to all nations, kindred and tongues, be they friend or foe.

Theſe are ſtrong and ſolid reaſons for true philanthropy, and for ſuppreſſing that inveterate, malicious hatred againſt the Indian nations.

If you can think ſo, and you do moreover love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Saviour of the world, let your prayers and beſt wiſhes be for the ſucceſs & proſperity of this ſociety, and all goſpel miſſionaries, that God may be praiſed among all the nations of this continent.

JOHN ETTWEIN, Epiſc. Frrm.

BETHLEHEM,
Nov. 1ſt. 1787.

STATED RULES

OF

THE SOCIETY, &c.

WHEREAS we the ſubſcribers are fully convinced of the chriſtian zeal and godly concern, wherewith the evangelical Church, known by the name of the UNITAS FRATRUM or UNITED BRETHREN, has at all times endeavored to ſpread the ſaving knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and to carry the ſame even to the remoteſt Heathen nations; for which purpoſe alſo in this part of the world a miſſion among ſeveral Indian nations was begun by ſaid Church, and with bleſſing and good ſucceſs continued near fifty years: And as we ourſelves are members of ſaid Church, which has the ſalvation of men ſo near at heart, we cannot but moſt ardently wiſh to further this great

great work of God, the converſion of the Heathen, by all juſt and poſſible means.

Therefore we have reſolved, in the name of God, to form ourſelves into a Society by the name of '*A Society of the United Brethren for propagating the Goſpel among the Heathen*' And do herewith unanimouſly agree upon the following articles as the ſtated rules of this Society.

ARTICLE I.

This Society being formed of members of the Brethren's Church, ſhall have its fixed ſeat at Bethlehem, in Northampton county, in the ſtate of Pennſylvania, where the board of directors will meet and the uſual general meetings ſhall be held.

ARTICLE II.

All biſhops, preſbyters and deacons of the Brethren's Church, and others in office in the Brethren's congregations, are by virtue of their office and character, members of this Society.

Others

Others may, upon their deſire, or the recommendation of others, be alſo received as members, with the conſent of the Society.

ARTICLE III.

Only ſuch members of the Society who are alſo members of the Brethren's Church, have ſeat and vote in the Society, and are conſidered as actual members.

Beſides ſuch, the Society may receive as honorary members, perſons of other churches and denominations who are friends and wellwiſhers to the furtherance of the goſpel among the Heathen; who may be admitted to the general meetings of the Society, but have no vote in their deliberations.

ARTICLE IV.

As the true and only deſign of the Society is, to aſſiſt ſuch miſſionaries and their aſſiſtants, who from time to time are ſent to the Heathen by the directors of the Brethren's

miſſions:

miſſions: we will not confine our aſſiſtance to mere ſtated charities and contributions, but it ſhall be a pleaſure to us to further the bleſſed work by all poſſible means.

ARTICLE V.

We therefore hold ourſelves in duty bound to ſupport the miſſions of the Brethren by a free contribution, and taking an efficient part, as often as it is found neceſſary.

ARTICLE VI.

For conſtant directors of our Society we chooſe, conſtitute and appoint thoſe Brethren, who are appointed to be directors of the Brethren's congregations in North-America, and their ſucceſſors in office, together with three other aſſiſtants, to be choſen by the Society from the number of the actual members.

ARTICLE VII.

Thoſe three aſſiſtant directors ſhall annually

ally be choſen or confirmed by a majority of votes, in the appointed general meeting of the Society.

ARTICLE VIII.

In the ſame general meeting alſo the preſident of the Society ſhall annually be choſen in like manner or confirmed by a majority of votes, ſo that the ſame be always one of the aforeſaid directors.

ARTICLE IX.

The directors of the Society ſhall take care that a true and regular account of the ſituation and progreſs of the miſſions be from time to time communicated to the members of the Society. And the agents for the miſſions of the United Brethren are to correſpond with the miſſionaries and their aſſiſtants, and to provide them with all what the directors find neceſſary.

ARTICLE X.

One of the appointed agents is always to officiate

officiate as treaſurer and book-keeper of the Society, and has every year to give a regular and true account to the Society of all receipts and diſburſements.

ARTICLE XI.

The directors ſhall, at leaſt once every year, appoint a general meeting of the Society: But the preſident with four directors may, if the concerns of the Society require it, call the Society to meet extraordinary.

ARTICLE XII.

The directors are likewiſe empowered, upon an emergency, to borrow in the name of the Society any ſum of money not exceeding Five Hundred Dollars, from one general meeting to another, and to expend it for the uſe and benefit of the miſſions, whereof they are to give an account to the Society in the next following general meeting.

ARTI-

ARTICLE XIII.

All donations and bequeſts to the Society, and all its poſſeſſions, effects and property whatſoever and whereſoever, ſhall at all times and for ever, be and remain appropriated, ſecured, made uſe of and expended, to no other uſe but only the advantage and the furtherance of the miſſions among the Heathen.

And every member of the Society renounces herewith expreſsly, all and every claim to the property of the Society, and promiſes, that in caſe any thing of ſaid property ſhall be intruſted to his hands, or put upon his name in truſt, he will in no manner abuſe ſuch confidence, nor make for himſelf or his heirs claim or pretenſion to that, what is ſo intruſted unto him by the Society: and that he will act and do with it agreeably to the diſpoſal of the Society by the directors, and will at all times and in all caſes, faithfully and punctually obſerve their orders.

ARTI-

ARTICLE XIV.

And as we have hereby no other view or aim but the furtherance and propagation of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt among the poor benighted Heathen, and eſteem it a grace to ſupport that praiſe-worthy work by our ſmall ſervices, being conſtrained to it by the love of Chriſt—all the directors, aſſiſtants and officers of the Society, renounce for ever all demands and claims for ſalaries or rewards for their ſervices, and promiſe to do all what they do for the benefit of the Society, *gratis*.

ARTICLE XV.

The Society will be ever ready and willing to provide, in a fatherly manner, the neceſſaries of life for the miſſionaries and their aſſiſtants, as alſo for their widows and children. Therefore the miſſionaries and their aſſiſtants ſhall, in conformity to the rules of the Brethren, ſet aſide all temporal views and intereſts, and their ſole and only care and endeavours

endeavours ſhall be, to preach the goſpel to the Heathen, to inſtruct them faithfully in the doctrine of Jeſus and his apoſtles, and ſo by their word and examples to encourage them to virtue and induſtry.

ARTICLE XVI.

If one or more perſons are propoſed for new members of the Society, the directors have firſt to conſider, whether ſuch perſon or perſons can be uſeful to the Society in the execution of their aforeſaid deſigns: and when the propoſed perſons are approved by a majority of the members preſent, they are then admitted as members of this Society.

ARTICLE XVII.

But if negative votes are found, the directors ſhall inform themſelves of the reaſon of the objection; and if it can be removed to the ſatisfaction of the objectors, ſuch perſon or perſons can be propoſed again, and be received

ceived as members, if no new objection is made by the voters.

ARTICLE XVIII.

As every member is at liberty to withdraw from the Society, the Society alſo reſerves the liberty to exclude any member when it is found neceſſary; but this ſhall not be done without a mature conſideration of the directors, and approbation of two thirds of the general meeting; and ſuch an excluded perſon can in no manner be re-admitted, but by a new election.

ARTICLE XIX.

When new members are received, the rules of the Society are to be read to them; and each new member is to ſubſcribe them.

ARTICLE XX.

The Society can in future agree upon new articles and rules, if the circumſtances require it;

it; ſo that the ſame be not contrary to theſe preſent articles and the well-being of the Society.

ARTICLE XXI.

Theſe articles hereby agreed upon and accepted can only, after a moſt mature deliberation, be altered, and if any alteration is made it ſhall be in no wiſe againſt the conſtitution of the Brethren's Church, and the inſtruction for thoſe Brethren and Siſters who ſerve the goſpel among the Heathen. And that each ſuch intended alteration may be maturely examined by the directors and every voting member, it ſhall be firſt propoſed in a general meeting, and communicated to ſuch as were abſent, and in the next following general meeting it ſhall be conſidered, and brought to a determination.

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